Promotion of Tourism in Kashmir

1710. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to urge European countries to lift travel advisory to promote tourism in the country especially in Kashmir;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what other steps Government are taking to woo the foreign tourists to visit the valley and other tourist places?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) and (b) The Ministry of Tourism, through its overseas offices, Ministry of External Affairs and the Indian Missions abroad, takes up the matter regarding lifting of travel advisories, as and when issued by different countries, to promote tourism in the country, including Kashmir.

(c) The Ministry of Tourism, through the India tourism offices overseas, undertakes a series of promotional activities in tourist generating markets overseas to attract foreign tourists to visit tourist places in the country, including Kashmir. These include advertising, participation in Fairs and Exhibitions, organizing Seminars, Workshops and Road Shows, publication of Brochures and joint advertising support and inviting media personalities, tour operators and opinion makers to visit the country under the Hospitality Programme of the Ministry.

Buddhist circuit tours in Bihar and U.P.

1711. KUMARI NIRMALA DESHPANDE: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any plan to arrange Buddhist circuit tours in Bihar and U.P.;

(b) if so, what are the special arrangements being made to facilitate tours of foreign tourists, specially tourists from the East; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) to (c) Formulation and selling of tours to various destinations is primarily undertaken by tour operators, travel agents and State Tourism Development Corporations based on demand and tourist infrastructure available. The Ministry of Tourism has granted Central Financial Assistance to Governments of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh for development of the Buddhist Circuits. The Buddhist destinations of these States are also being promoted in overseas markets through the India tourism Offices abroad.

Linking of Port Blair with Phuket for promotion of tourism

1712. DR. K. MALAISAMY: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that, of late, Thailand has become the main outlet of narcotic trade of Myanmar;

(b) if so, whether it will not be unwise and dangerous to sign an accord to link Port Blair with Phuket for promoting tourism; and

(c) whether there has been a thorough investigation that Phuket is totally free from LTTE operation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) to (c) The agreement between Phuket and Port Blair provides for cooperation in education and culture, urban development, solid waste management, commerce, investments besides tourism.

Promotion of Medical Tourism

1713. SHRI R.P. GOENKA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a comprehensive scheme has been formulated to promote India as a healthcare destination to attract more foreign tourists;

(b) if so, the details thereof, including the low-cost super-speciality